

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of pretreating a sample in preparation for immunologically assaying a total amount of adiponectin present in the sample, comprising:

adding ~~at least one reactant selected from the group consisting of~~ an acid or a salt thereof, ~~a surfactant, and a protease~~ to the sample, the acid or salt having a pH of 4 or less;
and

allowing the ~~reactant~~ acid or salt to react with the sample without boiling the combined sample and ~~reactant~~ acid or salt;

wherein the sample is an adiponectin multimer-containing sample.

Claim 2-4 (Cancelled).

Claim 5 (Withdrawn – Currently Amended): An agent for pretreating a sample for immunologically assaying the total amount of adiponectin present in the sample, wherein:

the agent ~~contains at least one of a reducing agent,~~ comprises an acid or a salt thereof having a pH of 4 or less, ~~a surfactant, and a protease;~~ and,

in use, the pretreatment agent is allowed to react with the sample without undergoing boiling together with the sample.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): The agent according to claim 5, wherein the immunological assay is performed by making use of an insoluble carrier on which an anti-adiponectin antibody is put.

Claims 7-8 (Cancelled).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A method for measuring a total amount of adiponectin present in a sample, comprising:

adding ~~at least one reactant selected from the group consisting of a reducing agent, an acid or a salt thereof, a surfactant, and a protease~~ to the sample, the acid or salt having a pH of 4 or less;

allowing the ~~reactant~~ acid or salt to react with the sample without boiling the combined sample and ~~reactant~~ acid or salt; and

subsequently performing an immunological assay of the sample for adiponectin;

wherein the sample is an adiponectin multimer-containing sample.

Claim 10 (Original): The method according to claim 9, wherein the immunological assay is performed by making use of an insoluble carrier on which an anti-adiponectin antibody is put.

Claims 11-12 (Cancelled).

Claim 13 (Withdrawn – Currently Amended): An immunoassay reagent for immunologically assaying the total amount of adiponectin present in a sample, wherein the reagent includes a first reagent and a second reagent, the first reagent ~~contains at least one of a reducing agent, comprises~~ an acid or a salt thereof having a pH of 4 or less, a surfactant and a protease, the second reagent contains an insoluble carrier with an antibody for determining a level of adiponectin, and the reaction between the sample and the first reagent is carried out without boiling of the reaction system.

Claim 14 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein a surfactant is added to the sample along with the acid or salt.

Claim 15 (New): The agent of claim 5, further comprising a surfactant.

Claim 16 (New): The method of claim 9, wherein a surfactant is added to the sample along with the acid or salt.

Claim 17 (New): The immunoassay agent of claim 13, wherein the first reagent further comprises a surfactant.